AT&T to sell satellite phone from TerreStar

September 30 2009, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- AT&T Inc. plans to sell a satellite phone from TerreStar Corp. that can place calls even in the deep wilderness or at sea, the carrier said Wednesday.

The TerreStar Genus phone, due in the first quarter of next year, will have all the features of a standard "smart" phone, including a touch screen, "QWERTY" keyboard, and the ability to use AT&T's ground-

based wireless network. But it also will be able to connect to a TerreStar satellite for service in parts of North America where the cellular network doesn't reach, or when cell towers have been knocked out by disasters like hurricanes.

Dallas-based AT&T plans to market the phone first to business and government customers, and later to consumers. AT&T didn't disclose the price of the phone or the service. TerreStar has said before that it expects satellite calls to cost less than the roughly $1 per minute charged by existing satphone services like Iridium and Globalstar. Their phones are bulkier and lack the smart-phone capabilities of TerreStar's device, but have wider coverage. Iridium covers the whole world.

To connect to TerreStar's satellite, the phone will need a clear view of the southern sky, which means it will be difficult to use indoors.

Reston, Va.-based TerreStar's shares jumped 61 cents, or 29 percent, to $2.74 in morning trading Wednesday. It has traded between 21 cents and $2.75 over the past 52 weeks.

A competitor, SkyTerra Communications Inc., plans to launch two satellites next year to support phones similar to TerreStar's.

©2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: AT&T to sell satellite phone from TerreStar (2009, September 30) retrieved 15 February 2023 from https://phys.org/news/2009-09-att-satellite-terrestar.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.